

## Stewart Awards honor faculty, staff for excellence

By Meg Holden  
STAFF WRITER

Though the weather doesn't seem to agree, spring is approaching, and with it comes the season of celebrating the people who make Guilford great. The Bruce B. Stewart Teaching and Community Service Awards annually recognize two faculty members — one tenured and one non-tenured — and one staff member who make a difference in our community.

The Stewart Awards are named in honor of Bruce Stewart '60, who served Guilford in a number of positions, including assistant professor of education, provost, acting president, and chair of the Board of Trustees, according to the Guilford website. Stewart is a current trustee emeritus.

According to Joyce Eaton, executive assistant to the president, the awards began in 2006, using a fund established by Bill Soles '81 and Jan Soles Nelson '87. Each Stewart Award, presented by President

and Professor of Political Science Kent Chabotar in a ceremony every spring, is accompanied by a \$5,000 gift.

"The Soles wanted to recognize Bruce and everything he did for Guilford," said Chabotar. "The school wanted to recognize excellence among the faculty and staff, and Bruce was always an advocate for excellence, so the two ideas came together at just the right moment."

According to Chabotar, the Stewart Awards address a need that had previously been insufficiently met at Guilford — the need to express thanks.

"It's a continuing challenge to show appreciation," said Chabotar. "The Stewart Awards turn our attention to (the winners) and say, 'Thank you, job well done.'"

Nominations for the Stewart Awards come from many sources within the Guilford community, according to Eaton. Students, faculty, staff, alumni and even parents can and have submitted nominations.

There are three Stewart Awards, including two teaching awards and one community service award. The teaching award nominations are reviewed by a committee of faculty and students, and the community service award nominations are reviewed by a committee of staff and students.

Eaton said that the committees narrow the selection down to two recipients and an alternate for each award. The committees make a recommendation to Chabotar, who is responsible for choosing the final recipient of each award.

"I've never turned down a recommendation," said Chabotar. "I've been given two choices and had to choose between them."

While a committee can suggest to the President that the awards not be given, this has never happened, according to Chabotar.

Assistant Professor of Physics Donald Smith received a Stewart Award for non-tenured faculty in 2009.

"The best part was knowing who the

previous winners were, because they were all people I admire," said Smith. "It is an honor to be on that list."

Other previous winners include: tenured professors Vance Ricks, Frank Keegan, Jeff Jeske, Robert G. Williams and Carolyn Beard Whitlow; non-tenured professors Heather Hayton, David Newton, Eric Mortensen, and Maria Rosales; and staff members Teresa Sanford, Terry Hammond, Norma Middleton, Lynn Van Horn and Tammy Martin.

"The awards don't ignore the staff, which is important," said Smith. "It shows that we are all one community."

Community is the message, according to Chabotar.

"The awards celebrate two Guilford strengths," said Chabotar. "Our excellent teaching and our excellent service to the community."

Nominations for the 2011 Bruce B. Stewart Awards are now being accepted in the Office of the President.

## Life before Guilford:

## Charlie Tefft

By Kylie Gilliams  
STAFF WRITER

A person's space often reflects the occupant's personality and passions. For Continuing Part-time Lecturer in Art Charlie Tefft '97, this rings especially true; shelves of mugs, teapots and jars line the walls of his office, while books about clay and ceramics tools pile up on chairs.

Tefft, Guilford's ceramics guru, didn't grow up dreaming of being a potter and a professor. Like many children, he dreamt of becoming a veterinarian. However, life had other ideas for him.

"At some point between my first year of first grade and my second year of first grade, I was tested, and my parents found out I was dyslexic," Tefft said. "I ended up going to a school that had a program for dyslexic students."

This school introduced Tefft to working with clay, but he did not develop a keen interest in ceramics until later.

"One day in sixth grade — I was probably 12 or 13 — I came into that clay studio and there was a tabletop wheel there," Tefft said. "I thought, 'I want to learn that.'"

Tefft continued making pots in high school. As part of an SAT prep course, he took a test which matches a person with possible careers.

"I got helicopter pilot, craftsman or academic," Tefft said. "I heard from so many people that it was hard to make a living (as a craftsman); I thought, 'I don't want to do that.' Academic, I thought, 'How in the world?' Being dyslexic, being in academia seemed like torture to me ... Here I am, sort of in both of those fields."

After high school, Tefft attended Guilford as a student, but didn't initially decide to focus on art. He soon changed his mind.

"I took a clay class first semester sophomore year, and at some point over that semester, I realized there wasn't anything in school that I was going to work harder at," said Tefft. "It came naturally. It wasn't for a grade; it wasn't because someone was telling me to do it."

Throughout his high school and college careers, he also played team sports.

"I knew Charlie as a very gifted athlete," said Mark Dixon '96, part-time lecturer in art and former classmate of Tefft's. "Every time we played soccer, he left us in the dust."

After graduation, Tefft moved to Atlanta to make pots full-time. After almost two years, he came back to Guilford to fill in as the ceramics professor, which ended up being a long-term position, although he originally intended to only stay for five years.

"Over that five years, though, I spent so much time rebuilding the program, rebuilding kilns and building new kilns," he said. "You start having ceramics majors and having relationships with them and you think, 'I can't just leave in their junior year.'"

I didn't have to look far to see the evidence of Tefft's hands-on dedication to his students. As I left the studio, he walked over to a student working with a small ball of clay.

"Okay, now get that spinning on the wheel," Tefft said as he reached over, dipped his hands in slip and guided her hands over the swiftly-whirling clay.



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COURTESY OF CHARLIE TEFFT

(Top left and right) Charlie Tefft, continuing part-time lecturer in art, lends a hand to a student in the ceramics studio. (Above) Tefft, front left, with his family before his clay calling.